

Hafa Adai!

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Ex-Finance chief Atalig found in contempt

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

As expected, a special committee of the House of Representatives found former Department of Finance secretary David DLG. Atalig in contempt yesterday for invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in responding to most questions relating to the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity, and Stability Together grant program.

» **Committee members grill Atalig about BOOST applications of family members**

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Former Department of Finance secretary David DLG. Atalig and his counsel, Bruce Berline, wait for the House of Representatives special committee to resume the hearing after a brief recess yesterday afternoon.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



House rejects the Senate's version of revised \$15M MPLT line of credit bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Without much ado, the House of Representatives rejected

yesterday the Senate version of a bill that repeals and re-enacts a newly enacted public law that authorizes

See HOUSE on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
In this screengrab from a YouTube video, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) presides over a House of Representatives' session yesterday, during which House members voted 15-4 to reject the Senate version of a bill that repeals and re-enacts a newly enacted public law that authorizes the Commonwealth government to negotiate a \$15-million revolving line of credit with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

Ex-Saipan HS band teacher accused of producing child porn in Malaysia

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The U.S. government has filed a superseding indictment in the U.S. District Court for the NMI against former Saipan high school band teacher David Matthew Frahm, who is

being accused of producing child pornography in Malaysia.

Frahm, who left the CNMI sometime before or after he was charged with one count of attempted sexual exploitation of a child



back in 2023, was arrested in Malaysia last month after he was allegedly caught filming a minor while in the shower of her home.

Following his arrest, assistant U.S. Attorney Eric O'Malley

filed a superseding indictment against Frahm, adding one count of possession of child pornography and one count of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places. That's on top of the existing charge of attempted sexual exploitation

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Arrivals up 56% last February

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the CNMI grew 56% to 23,207 visitors in February 2024, compared to 14,863 visitors received in February 2023.

However, monthly arrivals were 39% lower

compared to pre-pandemic levels of February 2019, when arrivals to Saipan, Tinian, and Rota reached 38,049 visitors.

Visitor arrivals from Korea registered 16,415 visitors in February, 37% higher than

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INSIDE



BUSINESS

Hyatt Regency Saipan's legendary Miyako, Saipan's only Japanese hotel buffet, is ready to welcome back all guests.

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NATION

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump clinched their parties' presidential nominations Tuesday.

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LIFE & STYLE

The scandal over Kate, Princess of Wales' family snapshot is a new chapter in the thorny relationship between the media and Britain's royal family.

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Kagman High School teacher Meena Benavente and KHS senior James Castro, third and second from left, pose for a photo with Rotarians of the Rotary Club of Saipan, including president Irene Holl, after Benavente's presentation at the club's weekly meeting last Tuesday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

CHRYSTAL MARINO



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Meena Benavente, Kagman High School 12th grade English and Language Arts teacher, and KHS senior James Castro share with Rotarians a new project in KHS' ELA class during the Rotary Club of Saipan's weekly meeting last Tuesday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.



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Local

KHS seniors get to learn about business in ELA class

when we're out there, we're... aware of what possibilities we have," she said.

She said she helps students learn business aspects in her class by using business reading and study materials as students work materials.

"Our students have to read a lot, right? There's a lot of research involved, so there's reading comprehension. They have to write a lot, so your writing skills are established. You have to research, so your research skills are all there. You're communicating and networking, so your presentation and speech skills are being implemented. So anything essential to the English language, I believe, is all being properly incorporated within this project," she explained.

In their presentations, Benavente and Castro not only presented the program to the Rotary but also invited Rotarians to partner with them by sharing with students their own experiences in the field of business.

Benavente said that, in light of the ongoing economic crisis, and based on what she learned last summer during a training opportunity, she wanted to help students learn these skills while learning to communicate effectively, which she said go hand in hand.

In a later interview, Benavente said the KHS project was sparked by a training opportunity she had in California over the summer called Project-Based Learning, which is geared toward bringing real-world scenarios into the classroom.

"And so business is the big idea. Entrepreneurship is the big idea. But it's also a way to help our students learn, like proper planning, budgeting, understanding credit, things that we might not be able to learn at home," she said.

By exposing the students to business, they get to explore these matters firsthand and gain firsthand experience "so that right after graduation

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Green Consume denies liability in assault lawsuit

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Joy Lee Corp., which does business as Green Consume Market, is denying the vicarious liability charge that had been filed against it by a former employee who claims she was assaulted by Green Consume's store manager, Ren Wei Li.

Joy Lee denied both the vicarious liability charge and accusation of constructive discharge and is asking the Superior Court to dismiss the complaint.

Earlier this year, Maria Elena Sapo sued Joy Lee Corp. and its store manager, Li, on the grounds of wrongful and constructive termination, assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and vicarious liability.

Colin M. Thompson, who represents both Joy Lee and Li, argues that Sapo failed to provide proof that Joy Lee is vicariously liable for the assault and harassment she allegedly faced while employed at Green Consume.

"Sapo failed to provide any statement or factual accompaniment to demonstrate that as alleged, Li's conduct was assigned by Joy Lee, on behalf of Joy Lee, for the benefit of Joy Lee, or that Li engaged in a course of conduct within Joy Lee's control. Rather, Sapo seems to rely upon the simple fact that, because Li's alleged conduct took place at Joy Lee's place of business, Green Consume, Joy Lee is vicariously liable," Thompson said.

Because of this, Thompson argues that the vicarious liability charge against Joy Lee must be dismissed.

"It is simply not enough that assault and battery take place at work or takes place between coworkers to invoke vicarious liability on an employer," Thompson said.

Lastly, Thompson argues that because Sapo failed to prove that Joy Lee had any knowledge of Li's misconduct, she fails to state a claim for the charge of constructive discharge.

"Because Sapo failed to allege Joy Lee had ever received any knowledge of the alleged misconduct by Li, failed to allege that Joy Lee contributed in any way to the conditions which Sapo claimed were intolerable for her continued employment, and the extremely short duration of time between the two alleged incidents and her resignation, Sapo has failed to state a claim for constructive discharge," Thompson said.

According to the complaint, Li allegedly often verbally harassed Sapo during her employment at Green Consume by telling her he wanted her to be his girlfriend and would allegedly put a hand on Sapo's back at times.

Sapo said she kept telling Li that she did not want to be his girlfriend and that she had a boyfriend.

Sapo said she did not quit her job or complain to the police because she was afraid of not being able to find another job.

On March 2, 2022, Sapo claims she was tasked with opening the store when Li came to hand over some money. Sapo alleges that when she received the money, Li ran his hand across her chest. Sapo said she immediately wrapped

her arms around her chest and looked angrily at Li.

The next day, when Sapo reported to work, Li allegedly appeared to be upset about a minor error Sapo made. Sapo claims Li yelled at her in front of customers.

Sapo added when she explained the error, Li continued to yell at her in front of customers, claiming he wanted to embarrass her and show her that she would suffer because she refused to let Li touch her.

Sapo decided then that she could not take it anymore and told Li that she was quitting

her job and would call the police. Sapo said she called police that day to report the alleged sexual harassment and stopped working at the store.

When asked about video surveillance in the store, Li claimed that there was an issue with the cameras and that there was no video surveillance of the incident. However, Sapo claims that the cameras were working and the store did have video surveillance of the incident. There was no report of malfunction either the day before or the day after regarding cameras in the store, the complaint stated.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Green Consume Market and its manager, Li Ren Wei, are facing a wrongful termination and assault lawsuit filed by a former employee alleging she was sexually harassed while she was employed there.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is coming to an end.



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Senate passes House bill creating fund, council for opioid settlement funds

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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REPORTER

The Senate passed on Tuesday a House of Representatives bill that seeks to establish a fund from opioid settlement monies and a council to oversee funding for substance abuse treatment programs.

With all six senators present at a session voting "yes," House Bill 23-80 now goes to the desk of Gov. Arnold I. Palacios for enactment.

Before passing the legisla-

tion, the senators adopted the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs' report that recommended passage of the bill in its original form.

During the session's public comments portion, Joseph Kevin Villagomez, who is the administrator of the Addiction Services Unit at the Community Guidance Center of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., said the bill is intended to shore up their infrastructure

to address the problem of fentanyl and opioid abuse.

Villagomez said the problem is not in the CNMI yet, but the Commonwealth needs to gear up, as fentanyl and opioid abuse kills over 200,000 to 300,000 people per year in the United States.

He said they received some funding from a settlement two years ago and that they started training their clinicians to be able

to address fentanyl overdose in the community.

Villagomez said their plan now is to use some of the fundings that they received to make sure they have enough medication to arm front-liners on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota should they come in contact with somebody that may have been abusing opioids, specifically fentanyl.

House vice speaker Rep. Joel C. Camacho (Ind-Saipan) introduced House Bill 23-80 last Oct. 5. The House unani-

mously passed the legislation that same day.

Camacho stated in the bill that the CNMI anticipates receiving substantial payments from the settlement of litigation against the manufacturers and distributors of prescription opioid analgesics, pharmacies dispensing prescription opioid analgesics, and related parties for allegedly contributing to high rates of drug overdoses and

other drug-related harms.

He said this bill establishes a dedicated fund for substance abuse disorder abatement, and creates a council to handle the award of monies to agencies that engage in substance abuse disorder abatement.

Under the bill, the Opioid Litigation Proceeds Fund is established in the Commonwealth treasury. It will be administered by the Department of Finance.



Camacho

Marianas to see below normal rainfall through mid-March

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The National Weather Service said the Marianas, along with other U.S. affiliated islands, can expect below normal rainfall throughout this month, which would worsen drought conditions in the region.

The NWS stated in its most

recent regional weather report that severe drought continues to spread across the region due to below normal rainfall.

"Below-normal rainfall is expected for most of the region the next few weeks, with the exception of islands closest to the equator. This will allow drought conditions to worsen for most locations in the com-

ing weeks," NWS states.

However, as far as weather goes, the Marianas can expect pleasant weather conditions, with partly cloudy skies, moderate trade winds of 10 to 15 mph, and only spotty light showers through the weekend.

"The large seas and surf late last week have subsided, with a moderate risk of rip currents

now expected along north, west and east facing reefs and beaches, and combined seas of 5 to 8 feet," NWS adds.

NWS warns that a fire weather watch is possible if daytime winds are stronger than currently forecast due to the lack of rainfall.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

ATALIG

From page 1

All seven committee members present voted "yes" to a motion to find Atalig in contempt. They are Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance & Disaster-related Funding; Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan); committee vice chair Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan); Rep. Vicente C. Camacho (D-Saipan); Rep. Diego Vincent F. Camacho (D-Saipan); Rep. Angelo A. Camacho (Ind-Saipan); and Rep. Vincent S. Aldan (Ind-Saipan).

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) was present in most parts of the hearing, but

was not around during the voting. Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) was absent, but excused from the hearing.

Atalig completed yesterday afternoon the second day of his testimony. He was accompanied by his lawyer, Bruce Berline.

Yumul said the next BOOST hearing will be announced.

The special committee had already found in contempt Shayne Villanueva of Roil Soil, and Robert Travilla and Salina Sapp of Nonstop Corp. for invoking their Fifth Amendment right and refusing to answer questions. Villanueva, Travilla, and Sapp were in charge of marketing the \$17-million BOOST Program. Bank of Saipan was the administrator of the program.

At the advice of his counsel, Atalig invoked his Fifth

Amendment right against self-incrimination in responding to most of the questions relating to the BOOST Program.

It was Flores who made the motion to find Atalig in contempt, saying Atalig repeatedly refused to testify under oath. She said such failure to respond is in violation of the law.

In addition, Flores said that evidence presented showed that Atalig, in his capacity as Finance secretary, willfully interfered with the joint investigation of the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee of the previous 22nd Legislature.

She further moved that the special committee transmit a report to the House and ask Speaker Edmund S. Villag-

omez (Ind-Saipan) to send a statement of contempt to the CNMI Attorney General for Atalig's prosecution.

Among the questions asked that Atalig refused to answer are: Did he ever pick up checks or expedite the approval process for the approval of his family members' BOOST applications?; Did he ever email the Bank of Saipan in connection with the BOOST applications of family members?; Is he familiar with Maga'lahe Grill, Dash Car Wash, Marianas Post Express, Fat Jack Holdings, Cory's Garden, and D&D Fish Market?; Is he affiliated or have any affiliation to these companies?

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

HOUSE

From page 1

the Commonwealth government to negotiate a \$15-million revolving line of credit, or LOC, with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

Without going into a discussion, 15 House members voted "yes" and five voted "no" to a motion to reject House Bill 23-95, House Substitute 1, Senate Substitute 3.

Those who voted "no"

were Reps. Roy Christopher A. Ada (R-Saipan), Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona (R-Saipan), Julie Marie A. Ogo (Ind-Rota), and Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian). Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) was absent but was excused from the session.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) soon after created a conference committee that will resolve their differences on the bill with the Senate conference committee.

Villagomez appointed Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) as chair of the House conferees, Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) as vice chair, Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) as a member, and Rep. Vincent S. Aldan (Ind-Saipan) as an alternate.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) also created yesterday a conference committee and appointed Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) as chair, and Sen. Celina R. Babauta

(D-Saipan) and Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) as members. Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) was appointed as an alternate member.

The Senate's version of the bill proposes to reduce the MPLT line of credit from \$15 million to \$13 million and authorizes a \$2-million loan for Tinian and Rota, at \$1 million each.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

TEACHER

From page 1

of a child.

The superseding indictment, which was unsealed yesterday, replaces the indictment issued last September 2023.

In the "attempted sexu-

al exploitation of a child" charge, the indictment states that Frahm attempted to take a photo of a minor while using the toilet at the high school he worked for, Marianas High School, back in March 2019.

As for the one count of pos-

session of child pornography, Frahm was allegedly caught

producing child pornography in Malaysia. *Saipan Tribune* learned from international media outlets that Frahm was allegedly caught taking a video of an 11-year-old girl as she bathed in her home.

Saipan Tribune learned that Frahm remains in prison without bail in Malaysia.

He has loved the experience so far. "I like learning new things, like what a corporation is, what an LLC is, and the different liabilities that we have. I like learning new things about entrepreneurship."

Castro is now a student intern at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and he looks forward to having his own business someday, with something that's focused on promoting the CNMI's culture.

"I want to create a business that will help our heritage and tradition...because I feel like it's getting lost. I want to cultivate our culture, traditions," he said.

He hopes other schools will also give this sort of opportunities to their students. "I do hope for it to branch out to the other schools because I feel like entrepreneurship is something that isn't really talked about, especially in an English class, which was something that was astonishing. So I feel like a lot of schools should get into this program."

Top Shelf offers \$10K Shopping Spree as hole-in-one prize

In support of funding higher education in the CNMI, Top Shelf Wines and Spirits will be offering a \$10,000 shopping spree at its store as a hole-in-one prize at the Northern Marianas College Foundation upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024.

"We're proud to partner with the NMC Golf Open by contributing \$10,000 worth of in-store items as a hole-in-one prize this year. We hope this will help add excitement to the event while supporting higher education in the CNMI," said Top Shelf Wines and Spirits owner John Jones.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event at the LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250.



Top Shelf Wines and Spirits has announced that it is offering a \$10,000 shopping spree at its store as a hole-in-one prize for the upcoming 19th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Open. In the photo are, from left, Northern Marianas College student Richard Baleares, Top Shelf Wines and Spirits employees Raquel Mostales and Maricel Bayog, and NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero.

"On behalf of NMC's Foundation, we're truly grateful to Top Shelf Wines and Spirits for their commitment to lasting

impact in higher education," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament, which is

GCC Edge organizers are grateful to all the presenters for taking time to share their insights with GCC students. The student conference concluded with team-building activities, lunch, and giveaways for the student participants.

To learn more about this event or upcoming student activities at GCC, visit the Center for Student Involvement located in Room 5204 at the Student Center building, or email csci@guamcc.edu. (PR)

» Students learn valuable work life lessons

The event featured skill shop sessions designed to equip student participants for future academic pursuits or entry into the workforce. The skill shop sessions featured:

■ "Job Seeker's Guide" by guest speakers Taylor Crisostomo, People's Operations business partner, and Nicole Mesa, Learning & Development manager, both from Docomo Pacific. Crisostomo and Mesa

also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Like previous tournaments, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a 2023 Honda

Civic Type R from Joeten Motors, a \$10,000 cash prize from Ambyth Shipping, a \$10,000 cash prize from Pacifica Insurance, and a \$3,000 cash prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu. (PR)

cho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram (nmc.proa) or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

GCC hosts EDGE Conference

Guam Community College's Center for Student Involvement and Council for Postsecondary Student Affairs hosted "The Edge" Student Conference, on Friday, March 8, in the new GCC Multipurpose Auditorium.

The event featured skill shop sessions designed to equip student participants for future academic pursuits or entry into the workforce. The skill shop sessions featured:

■ "Job Seeker's Guide" by guest speakers Taylor Crisostomo, People's Operations business partner, and Nicole Mesa, Learning & Development manager, both from Docomo Pacific. Crisostomo and Mesa

coached student participants in creating exceptional resumes and discussed what employers seek in resumes.

GCC Edge organizers are grateful to all the presenters for taking time to share their insights with GCC students. The student conference concluded with team-building activities, lunch, and giveaways for the student participants.

To learn more about this event or upcoming student activities at GCC, visit the Center for Student Involvement located in Room 5204 at the Student Center building, or email csci@guamcc.edu. (PR)

Scheduled water service interruption today in San Antonio

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be a scheduled water service interruption affecting customers in San Antonio today, March 14, 2024.

Customers in the area will experience low to no water pressure during the transition phase from the old water system to the newly installed PVC waterline. Please allow one to two hours for the waterlines to fully pressurize.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as it works to ensure reliable service for our customers. For more information, contact CUC's hotline at (670) 236-4333, visit its website, and monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The map of Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled water service interruption today in San Antonio.

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Signal in the noise: Trump's authoritarianism must be top of mind

There's a concept in behavioral science known as "normalcy bias," or the notion that we are prone to believe that status quo will more or less hold, and to underestimate the likelihood of worst-case scenarios. This was useful in granting us the evolutionary advantages of resiliency and optimism; human collaboration and creativity was powered to some extent by the expectation that things would pan out in the end, and no matter what, we'd prevail.

As beneficial as this has proved for our species, it has pitfalls, most significantly the fact that we don't see the really bad things coming, or tend to ignore them. The last two decades have been a masterclass in the dangers of this cognitive quirk—our hubristic campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the economic meltdown whose clear signs we collectively ignored, the surging devastation of climate change after many years of warnings were not heeded, the preventable loss of life as leaders waved away the threat of COVID.

Now, there's Donald Trump. With Super Tuesday powering the former president forward toward the Republican nomination and dispelling any last remaining grains of doubt about his eventual candidacy, we are again hurtling to a showdown between Joe Biden and Trump. Yet despite the rematch, this is not the same situation we had four years ago.

We know much more about the lengths to which Trump is willing to go to secure his power and subvert the rule of law. We know about Jan. 6, about how close we came to having sitting members of Congress and the vice president violently attacked and perhaps hanged during a violent takeover of our halls of power. We know how hard Trump tried to nullify the voters' choices, and how he's lionized the insurrectionist shock troops of his attempted coup.

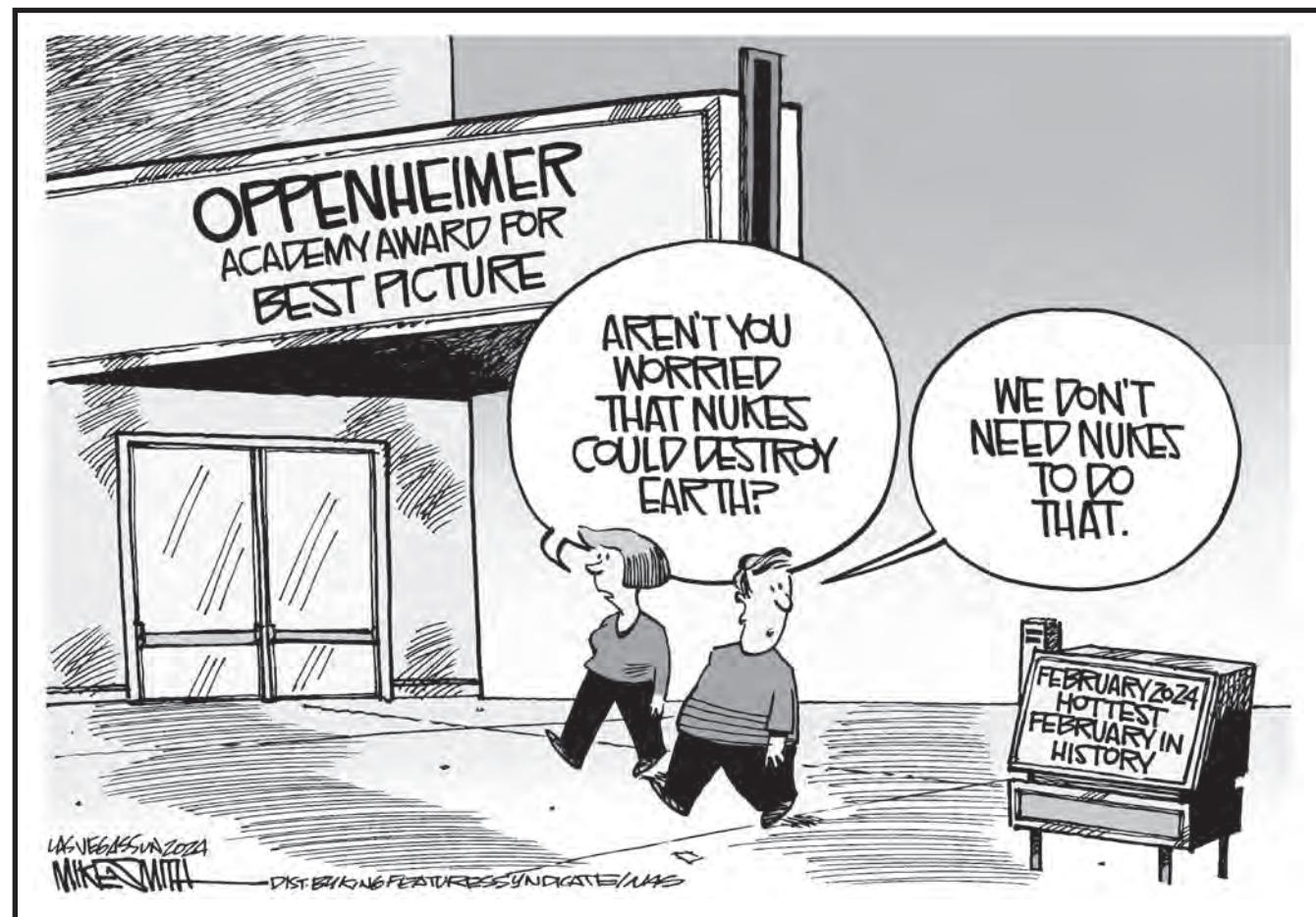
More importantly, we know about what he's planning if he's ever allowed presidential power again. We do not have to speculate, because Trump has said it himself, that he would implement the "termination" of parts of the Constitution, that he would be a "dictator" on his first day in office.

He has promised rather explicitly to utilize federal law enforcement to pursue his political enemies on spurious grounds, an approach already pioneered by his MAGA followers in Congress with sham impeachments. His closest allies have spelled out, in detail, plans to deploy the military widely across the country, for immigration enforcement and who knows what else.

At least, we should know. Some recent polling makes clear that far too much of the country remains unaware of some of Trump's most authoritarian impulses and comments. There is the sense that he can't be serious, or that these are politically-motivated attacks even when they're direct quotes from Trump and his MAGA entourage. Normalcy bias again at work, threatening to lull us into false security.

When Trump talks about subverting our government and shaping it to his own image, we should take him at his word.

See SIGNAL on Page 7



In 2024, it's an election between authoritarianism and the uncommitted

Super Tuesday is over and so is any hope that Donald Trump isn't speeding toward the White House.

With clear victories in the primaries, including in California, and a Supreme Court win that keeps him on the Colorado ballot, any belief that Trump doesn't have a good chance of moving back into the Executive Mansion, or that the Republican Party will turn away from hate and authoritarianism, is magical thinking.

Just about as magical as believing that Biden will somehow begin to inspire the many critical voters who have slowly been turning away from him—young voters swayed by a campaign against his age; voters agonized by the destruction in Gaza; voters who despite the strong economy still are shocked by inflation that makes filling the refrigerator increasingly hard.

And most of all, voters like me who are just tired.

It is incredibly disconcerting that we don't have a Democratic nominee who inspires faith, much less excitement.

"Hold your nose and vote for Hillary" wasn't a winning strategy in 2016 (personally, I voted for her because I thought she'd be a terrific president). But we are in the same position now as we were then—an unpopular candidate versus a useful idiot.

It is increasingly hard to care but increasingly dangerous not to.

When Gov. Gavin Newsom began his I Am Not Running For President Tour last year, I was quick to call that magical thinking, too—a hubristic display of opportunism. And of course, it didn't pan out for a 2024 run.

But I give it to his strategists—Newsom saw this future at the gates of Hades and created a unique lane that we didn't know we needed: preacher to the uncommitted.

In the "Inferno," Dante described the vestibule of hell as populated by those who did not choose a side in life, neither brazen enough to embrace evil nor strong enough to fight it.

These days, we call them independents, or the disenfranchised, or the worn-out weary like me. Case in point: Monday, my ballot was still sitting unopened on the living room table.

Our numbers are growing and we will determine America's collective future. By voting for a Kennedy, a Stein, a West. Or by not voting at all.

At a dinner party recently, I sat next to a professor from a California university who pointed out that we survived the first Trump presidency. Maybe the second one won't be so bad, he argued.

It was a little like standing in the slaughterhouse line with a fellow calf, bellowing that he'd never heard anyone come out with a complaint. For a minute, I saw his point.

Fascist fatigue is real.

But consider this.

Toppling a democracy requires a fearful populace—people so

afraid for their own futures and the futures of their children that they will exchange rights for perceived safety. Trump is pro when it comes to stoking these fears, and it is not an accident.

It's an actual written plan that warns "the very moral foundations of our society are in peril," and that "(i)n many ways, the entire point of centralizing political power is to subvert the family. Its purpose is to replace people's natural loves and loyalties with unnatural ones."

Those are just a few lines from the Heritage Foundation's "Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise," written as a guidebook for what to do after a Trump win.

The difference between Trump term one and term two, if it happens, will be that kind of organization.

When Trump won the first time, those who would replace democracy with Christian theocracy weren't prepared. They had an agenda, but lacked the skills and discipline to fully implement it.

Lesson learned.

For the past four years, this country's far-right, extremist element hasn't just been emboldened—they have been organizing like a Starbucks union drive. They will be, as they have repeatedly promised, ready on Day 1 to remake America as a place of exclusion rather than inclusion.

Trump (if not bankrupt) may personally be willing to foot the bill for red cloaks for women, but it is these unseen ranks of a new extremist ruling class that will make sure they stay on with federal laws that even California cannot avoid.

For those who don't want to hold their nose and vote for Biden, I get it. Nobody should have to chose a candidate they don't believe in or put someone in the White House just to prevent something worse. For those too tired to care, sisters and brothers, I feel you.

But those are the voters who will decide this election.

This isn't Trump vs. Biden. It's democracy vs. the uncommitted, the tired, the angry, the broke.

But you only get to lose democracy once.

A vote from the vestibule of hell is one heck of a way to do it.



EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

My family in Gaza faces starvation. How do I find solace this Ramadan?

Ordinarily, the days leading up to Ramadan, the holy month when Muslims give up food and drink from dawn to dusk, are exuberant. My younger children and I would prepare “iftar jars” and food baskets with Ramadan staples, such as dates, nuts and apricot paste, to hand out to neighbors. We’d decorate the house and send invitations for iftar, the meal when we break our fast, to friends and family.

But this year, as Palestinians with family in Gaza, our enthusiasm has been overshadowed with overwhelming grief. Ramadan begins this week. No decorations have made their way out of the basement and no baskets have been distributed.

Israel’s war on Gaza, which the International Court of Justice and a U.S. federal court found could amount to genocide, has claimed the lives of my aunt, my three adult cousins and their families. It has also killed more than 100 members of my extended family along with more than 30,000 other Palestinians. I cannot begin to imagine what Ramadan will look like for them, as United Nations officials have said that more than half a million people in Gaza are a “step away” from famine, and Israel blocks the entry of aid trucks.

Thirteen years ago, while researching for my cookbook on Gaza cuisine, I observed Ramadan there. There was a heat wave amid power outages, the result of an Israeli attack on Gaza’s power plant and restrictions on diesel fuel.

Despite it all, the air then was electric with excitement. Qatayif vendors popped up just around sunset, flipping and selling the traditional Ramadan pancakes ready to stuff with nuts, milk pudding or cheese. Children lighted the dark skyline with their fawanees, or lanterns, and men and women headed to the mosque for the evening taraweeh prayers, a fixture of the holy month. There will be none of that this year.

This Ramadan, I oscillate between a profound sense of loss and sadness and a feeling of urgency and obligation to do anything I can to help my family, to organize, to speak out. Sometimes, I feel bro-

ken and empty inside, as we face a cruel reality in which even our best efforts cannot seem to stop the slaughter, and all I can muster the energy to do is cry.

In WhatsApp messages, my Gaza relatives tell me they have nothing left to go back to, no mosques to go pray in, no electricity, no fuel to cook with. What little food they find is purchased at incredibly inflated prices, cooked in a makeshift cob oven or in tin ovens, using wood or charcoal.

Eleven of my family members, including my uncle who has a heart condition, are currently in Rafah after fleeing their Gaza City home in the north. Now, they have nowhere left to hide, as they await an imminent Israeli invasion into Rafah.

Dozens of other family members remain in Gaza City, cut off from those in the south, from the trickle of humanitarian aid entering the territory. They face looming starvation. We learn only whether they are alive or not through the occasional audio note. One cousin recently told me he hadn’t tasted bread, fruit, vegetables or meat in months, surviving instead on hard-to-find canned food.

Despite all this, my cousins say they plan to honor Ramadan however they can, and to prepare traditional Palestinian meals for iftar, improvising with whatever ingredients are on hand. Stews with powdered chicken bouillon instead of protein. Wild greens and tinned meat or tuna if they are lucky. Animal feed instead of flour for making bread. For my relatives, observing Ramadan and cooking also serve as acts of resistance and sumood, or steadfastness, against a dehumanizing war.

Back in Maryland, I’m left wondering how to talk to my children about what is happening, as we gather around our iftar tables. What meaning do we find in Ramadan given the situation back home? The conversations will be difficult, but necessary. And from these points of discomfort and angst, I hope we grow spiritually and mentally.

By LAILA EL-HADDAD
Los Angeles Times



Laila El-Haddad is a writer based in Clarksville, Maryland, and the co-author of *The Gaza Kitchen: A Palestinian Culinary Journey*.@gazamom

I am frustrated with the Biden administration’s unwavering diplomatic, financial and military support of Israel’s bombardment, which has systematically destroyed much of Gaza including its agricultural land and assets, and its local food systems. Human Rights Watch has said the Israeli government is employing starvation as a “weapon of war.” Instead of pressuring Israel to open land crossings, the U.S. has airdropped food aid into Gaza and plans to build a temporary port to bring in humanitarian assistance. These efforts are woefully insufficient and amount to a public relations stunt as our government continues to provide bombs and arms to Israel.

During Ramadan, feeding a fasting person or hungry people is highly recommended. Living in the U.S., all I can do is send money to friends in Gaza who have set up neighborhood soup kitchens, preparing simple vegetarian stews using foraged wild greens like common mallow, or khobeiza.

In the Quran, patience is described as jameel, which means beautiful. Patience, perseverance and prayer are all we have left now. But that doesn’t make the hardship any easier.

In some ways, the horrific war has forced us to approach Ramadan in the spirit it was intended. To focus not on satisfying the self, but on purifying it of worldly desires, and in doing what we can to change an injustice around us.

These are the messages we will likely be sharing around our iftar tables this Ramadan, as our family struggles to find strength to make sense of the murderous catastrophe unfolding before our eyes.

‘Oppenheimer’s’ best performance—reminding us that we live in dangerous times

By JERRY BROWN and ERNEST MONIZ
LOS ANGELES TIMES

On Oscar night, the captivating story about the race to create the world’s first nuclear weapon took home an armload of Academy Awards. Above all things, though, we must remember this: After “Oppenheimer” won Best Picture last March 10, we will all wake up on March 11 just one terrible miscalculation, accident or deliberate act of madness away from civilization-ending nuclear destruction.

We deeply appreciate that “Oppenheimer” has brought the atomic bomb origin story to the big screen. Movies have the power to educate and inspire, and Christopher Nolan’s blockbuster is raising awareness that today’s nuclear danger is all too real, as horrific wars rage in two nuclear-armed regions of the world, a new arms race accelerates and global nuclear arsenals become ever more vulnerable to risks associated with cyber- and emerging technologies. Just last week, Vladimir Putin issued a chilling warning to countries considering aid for Ukraine. They must understand, he said, that “all this truly threatens a conflict with the use of nuclear weapons, and therefore the destruction of civilization.”

Not since the height of the Cold War has the threat of nuclear weapons been so ominous. How did we get here—and how can we step back from the brink of catastrophe?

Nolan’s film takes viewers back to World War II, when J. Robert Oppenheimer led a secret project to build the world’s first nuclear bomb. But “Oppenheimer” isn’t just history—it also is a devastating cautionary tale. Oppenheimer himself warned the world about the spread of nuclear weapons and the development of even more powerful weapons than the two that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In the aftermath of those bombings, we learned the gut-wrenching stories of those who experienced atomic devastation. For decades,

schoolchildren participated in duck-and-cover drills as the United States and the Soviet Union raced to build the biggest nuclear arsenals. In 1962, the world watched as Americans coped with suffocating fear for 13 days during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Eventually, almost 70,000 nuclear weapons threatened the world. Geopolitics and social action helped change that. With the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the U.S. and Russia reduced their nuclear stockpiles; ultimately 80% of global nuclear arsenals were eliminated. The glaring nuclear weapons threat seemed to fade. But there are still 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world and now the trend line is heading in the wrong direction.

Iran has demonstrated the technological capability to join the “nuclear club”—Russia, China, North Korea, Israel, India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, France and the United States. Leaders in other countries, from South Korea to Saudi Arabia, have suggested that they too could develop nuclear weapons in response to regional nuclear threats.

Some of the weapons that now exist are up to 80 times more powerful than the ones Oppenheimer built. Some are held by volatile dictators and in unstable regions; some could fall into the hands of nonstate actors. And with cyberthreats and the integration of artificial intelligence in military systems, the danger looms of nuclear war by accident or blunder.

Just the mere possession of thousands of nuclear weapons, spread among nine countries, presents unprecedented danger, and the implications are not widely understood. A small number of fallible human beings and a complex set of technical controls—by no means fail-safe—are all that stand between now and a nuclear apocalypse.

By showing moviegoers the detonation of just one nuclear weapon, “Oppenheimer” serves as a powerful reminder of the nuclear threat at a particularly dangerous moment.

Of course, this isn’t the first time nuclear threats have been a focus in movies and theaters.

In the 1960s, Stanley Kubrick captured people’s attention with his black comedy “Dr. Strangelove,” and Peter Sellars more recently brought the contemporary opera “Doctor Atomic” to life, telling, as “Oppenheimer” does, the story of the Manhattan Project. In the 1980s, “Terminator” envisioned an AI network launching a nuclear war.

The fact is, we are living at the mercy of weapons that could destroy civilization many times over.

It doesn’t have to be this way.

We must wake up to the reality of today’s nuclear threats, raise our voices and seize the opportunity to build a more peaceful world. Politicians must question the assumption that nuclear arsenals keep us safe. Leaders around the world must reenvision and strengthen treaties and nonproliferation agreements. With speed and deliberation, we should take steps toward a world without nuclear weapons. We have done it before. We can do it again.

It is time to heed Oppenheimer’s warnings.

Jerry Brown is executive chair of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and former governor of California. Ernest Moniz is co-chair and CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative and former U.S. secretary of Energy.

SIGNAL

From page 6

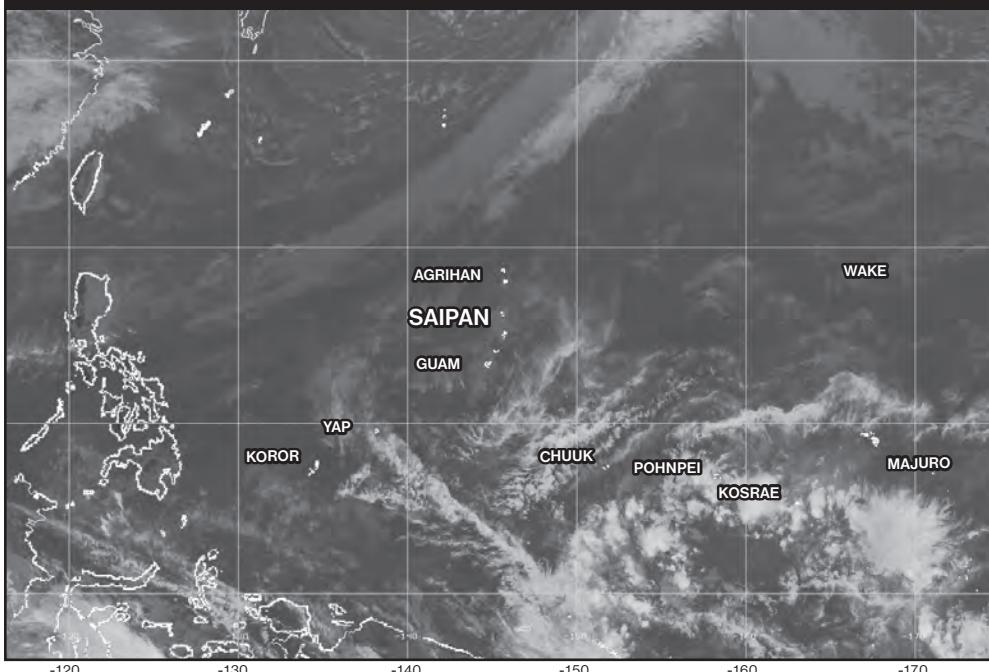
Most voters are relatively casual politics observers, tuning in occasionally as elections near and developing their views on sporadic information. Between now and November, it’s imperative to put front and center the dominant political story of our lifetimes, that of Trump’s open authoritarianism. Only the American public can stop him.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
85	76°	85	76°	85
76°	85	76°	85	76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:27 AM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows high end partly cloudy skies and isolated showers moving through the Marianas and surrounding waters. The Tanapag buoy shows 7 to 9 feet composed of northeast swell and wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA		
	▲	▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Windy	85° / 80°
Kosrae	Windy	85° / 80°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:25 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:24 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:23 AM	6:27 PM
Monday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:10 AM	10:22 PM	-
Friday	9:58 AM	11:23 PM	-
Saturday	10:49 AM	-	-
Sunday	-	12:23 AM	11:44 AM
Monday	-	1:21 AM	12:39 PM

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website: www.saipantribune.com.

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AROUND THE GLOBE		
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	74° / 66°
Beijing	Fair	59° / 32°
Hong Kong	Fair	71° / 62°
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 68°
London	Partly Cloudy	50° / 43°
Los Angeles	Thunderstorms	70° / 56°
Manila	Sunny	93° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	64° / 52°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
New York	Partly Cloudy	53° / 46°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	51° / 44°
Paris	Showers	54° / 39°
Busan	Sunny	54° / 36°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	66° / 48°
Salem	Cloudy	77° / 60°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 47°
Seoul	Sunny	52° / 29°
Tokyo	Sunny	54° / 43°
Washington, DC	Fair	74° / 44°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
4:28 AM	Low Tide	0.64
10:01 AM	High Tide	1.92
5:06 PM	Low Tide	-0.09
11:39 PM	High Tide	1.70

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)					GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN				
UA076 9:50AM 10:35AM Daily					UA174 8:00AM 8:45AM Daily				
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
UA824 7:05AM 9:45AM 1, 3, 5					UA825 9:25PM 2:00AM+1 2, 4, 7				
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-GUAM				
PR 111 5:55AM 7:55AM Daily					UA189 00:40AM 6:30AM 3, 6				
UA193 7:50PM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Palau					PR110 10:05PM 3:55AM+1 Daily				
UA183 7:55PM 9:50PM Daily					UA192 10:40PM 6:30AM+1 2, 5 via Palau				
7C3403/2305 4:40AM 10:20PM Daily					UA184 10:55PM 4:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7				
UA076/183 9:50AM 9:50PM Daily via Guam					UA189/174 00:40AM 8:45AM+1 3, 6 via Guam				
UA076/193 9:50AM 11:50PM 2, 5 via Guam, Palau					UA192/174 10:40PM 8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam				
7C2306/3406 11:15PM 3:30PM+1 Daily					UA184/174 10:55PM 8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam				
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					7C3406 10:10AM 3:30PM Daily				
TW308 2:15AM 6:10AM Daily					TW307 7:45PM 1:15AM+1 Daily				
7C3403 4:40AM 8:35AM Daily					7C3404 10:15PM 3:35AM+1 Daily				

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, TW'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN			

French Air Force crew trains at US Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point



A crew from the French Air Force arrived at Air Station Barbers Point on March 4, 2024, for a weeklong subject matter exchange with U.S. Coast Guard aircrews.

HONOLULU, Hawaii—A crew from the French Air Force arrived at Air Station Barbers Point on March 4, 2024, for a weeklong subject matter exchange with U.S. Coast Guard aircrews.

The seven-member team, composed of three pilots and four crew members, is stationed in French Polynesia, Tahiti, and flies a CN235 Casa aircraft. During their visit, they participated in various activities designed to enhance their aviation proficiency and build professional relationships with their Coast Guard counterparts.

On March 6, Commander Victor Yaguchi of Air Station Barbers Point provided the French aircrew with an in-depth briefing on Coast Guard aircraft missions. This included an overview of Air Station Barbers Point airframes, capabilities, and mission sets. The briefing served as a foundation for the crew's training experiences throughout the week.

"This visit is a valuable opportunity to collaborate with our French allies and share best practices in aviation operations," said Captain Maurice Murphy, commanding officer of Air Station Barbers Point. "The partnerships in the Pacific are invaluable, we work closely with our French Allies and Joint Rescue Coordination Center Tahiti to rescue mariners at sea."



The seven-member team is composed of three pilots and four crew members and is stationed in French Polynesia, Tahiti.



The seven-member team participated in various activities designed to enhance their aviation proficiency and build professional relationships with their Coast Guard counterparts.

The French crew utilized the air station as their base of operations for the week and conducted flights throughout the Hawaiian Island chain. This exposure to a complex and busy airspace allowed them to refine their communication procedures and flight skills. They specifically focused on:

■ Air-to-Air and Air-to-

Ground Communications: The crew honed their ability to communicate effectively in a congested airspace, a skillset critical for safe operations.

■ U.S. Flight Rules: The training familiarized the crew with U.S. Federal Aviation Administration regulations, ensuring smooth integration into the local airspace.



The seven-member team flies a CN235 Casa aircraft.

■ Coast Guard Search and Rescue Operations: The crew gained insight into the Coast Guard's B-0 SAR response

procedures, a vital capability for ensuring maritime safety in the vast Pacific Ocean.

The Hawaiian Islands pro-

vide the closest and busiest airspace to French Polynesia, making Air Station Barbers Point an ideal training location. This reinvigorated exchange program is expected to occur annually, fostering continued collaboration and professional development between the U.S. Coast Guard and the French Air Force.

Upon arrival, the ASBP staff warmly welcomed the French crew and presented them with traditional *kukui* nut leis, symbolizing protection and peace. This gesture reflects the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that underpins this exchange program. (USCG)



The crew from the French Air Force prepare to board their aircraft.

Business

Hyatt's Japanese buffet Miyako reopens

Hyatt Regency Saipan's legendary Miyako, Saipan's only Japanese hotel buffet, is ready to welcome back all guests. After a hiatus of two and a half months, starting Monday, March 18, 2024, Miyako will shine again in its consistent environment by offering authentic Japanese dining experiences paired with Miyako's evergreen signature dishes.

Those who are looking for a sumptuous lunch buffet are invited Mondays to Thursdays from 11:30am to 2:30pm, while dinner periods are available on Wednesdays to Fridays, from 6pm to 9pm.

In addition, Hyatt Regency Saipan is excited to welcome its new chef de cuisine, Ryo Kojima, who will



Hyatt Regency Saipan's Miyako Japanese buffet reopens on Monday, March 18, 2024.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hyatt Regency Saipan's chef de cuisine Ryo Kojima.

bassy of Japan in the Ukraine.

Kojima joined the Hyatt family in 2010 where he worked at various locations, including Grand Hyatt Dubai, the Bahamas, and most recently at the 1,600-room Grand Hyatt Jeju. He will work alongside executive chef Christopher Adams on extended assignments, bringing his expertise to other areas of the hotel's culinary landscape.

For Miyako reservations, visit saipan.regency.hyatt.com and click the "dining tab" or call (670) 234-1234. (PR)

Meet me for Marvelous Matcha at The Tsubaki Tower

TUMON, GUAM—The Tsubaki Tower invites matcha aficionados and fans to join them for the resort's new Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea service, featuring authentic matcha tea flown in from Fukuoka, Japan.

"Our Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea is a celebration of all things green tea. We are collaborating with a well-respected and award-winning tea purveyor, Chajiyu Kukan, in Fukuoka, Japan," said Ken Yanagisawa, general manager of The Tsubaki Tower. "In essence, this afternoon tea experience is a celebration of the beautiful city of Fukuoka and its rich history steeped in tea traditions. This collaboration will better connect Guam and Fukuoka through delightful flavors and sweet experiences."

As part of the Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea experience, The Tsubaki Tower added new matcha desserts and pastries to its afternoon tea menu, such as the Matcha Opera Cake, the Matcha Mont Blanc, Matcha Cheese Tart, and Matcha Macaron, to name a few. Each guest receives a tiered tower of matcha desserts and a delectable selection of savory bites, with the Wagyu Beef and Truffle Sandwich and the Lobster Quiche as guest favorites. To accompany the pastries, The Tsubaki Tower selected varieties of Japanese teas to complete the experi-



The Tsubaki Tower's Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea includes new matcha desserts and pastries.

ence—Gyokuro, which is grown in the shade and known for its sweet flavor, and Hojicha, a roasted green tea known for its nutty, roasted flavor and light green and golden color.

"We invite the community to experience our new afternoon tea service throughout the month of March to enjoy authentic Yame Matcha selected by Chajiyu Kukan. Yame Matcha is grown in Yame

City, located in the southern part of Fukuoka Prefecture. This area is known for producing award-winning Gyokuro teas, which are the highest class of green tea in Japan," Yanagisawa added.

The Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea is served from 2pm to 4pm in the Fanhale lobby lounge overlooking Tumon Bay, making it an unforget-

table experience for couples, families with children, or groups of friends. The cost per person is \$40 (plus 10% service charge) and available while supplies last. Reservations can be made 48 hours in advance for parties of two or more by calling (671) 969-5200.

Yanagisawa said, "We are bringing the flavors of Fukuoka to Guam, and hopefully, we will entice residents to travel to this beautiful city and experience its tea culture in person."

Additionally, on March 17, the Hinekka Deli, located at the lobby level, will be serving Matcha Banana Frappes. Casa Oceano will also feature matcha pastries during Sunday Brunch and dinner, while supplies last.

The Tsubaki Tower is Guam's newest luxury resort experience. The Tsubaki Tower's mission is to be an authentic ambassador of Guam's culture, natural beauty, and unique history.

Located along the shores of stunning Gun Beach, the 27-story resort will offer guests panoramic views of Guam's famous sunsets and the warm blues of the Pacific Ocean.

The resort is nestled in the northern part of Tumon Bay and features 340 breathtaking oceanfront rooms and suites, all within walking distance of Guam's most beautiful white-sand beaches and a world-class marine preserve. The resort features two types of dining, three types of bars, a lobby lounge, deli, club lounge, swimming pools, garden plaza, multifunction room, and a chapel in the sky.

For further information about The Tsubaki Tower, call (671) 969-5200, visit tsubakitower.premierhotel-group.com/guam/, or engage with them on Instagram and Facebook (@thetsubakitower). (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The new matcha desserts and pastries include Matcha Opera Cake, the Matcha Mont Blanc, Matcha Cheese Tart, and Matcha Macaron, to name a few.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Each guest of the Marvelous Matcha Afternoon Tea receives a tiered tower of matcha desserts and a delectable selection of savory bites.

lead all Japanese culinary aspects of the resort. Kojima brings 22 years of Japanese culinary experience to Hyatt Regency Saipan. In 1992, Kojima started his career in Tokyo and has worked as the official residence chef for the Consulate General of Japan in New Zealand and the Em-

House poised to pass bill banning TikTok but it faces uncertain path in the Senate

WASHINGTON (AP)—A bill that could lead to a ban of the popular video app TikTok in the United States is expected to pass the House on Wednesday as lawmakers act on concerns that the company's ownership structure is a threat to national security.

The bill would require the Chinese firm ByteDance to divest TikTok and other applications it owns within six months of the bill's enactment or those apps would be prohibited. The lawmakers contend that ByteDance is beholden to the Chinese government, which could demand access to the data of TikTok's consumers in the U.S. any time it wants. The worry stems from a set of Chinese national security laws that compel organizations to assist with intelligence gathering.

House passage of the bill would only be the first step. The Senate would also need to pass the measure for it to become law, and lawmakers in that chamber indicated it would undergo a thorough review. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said he'll have to consult with relevant committee chairs to determine the bill's path.

President Joe Biden has said if Congress passes the measure, he will sign it.

The House vote is poised to open a new front in the long-running feud between lawmakers and the tech industry. Members of Congress have long been critical of tech platforms and their expansive influence, often clashing with executives over industry practices. But by targeting TikTok, lawmakers are singling out a platform popular with millions of people, many of whom skew younger, just months before an election.

Ahead of the House vote, a top national security official in the Biden administration held a closed-door briefing Tuesday with lawmakers to discuss

TikTok and the national security implications. Lawmakers are balancing those security concerns against a desire not to limit free speech online.

"What we've tried to do here is be very thoughtful and deliberate about the need to force a divestiture of TikTok without granting any authority to the executive branch to regulate content or go after any American company," said Rep. Mike Gallagher, the bill's author, as he emerged from the briefing.

TikTok has long denied that it could be used as a tool of the Chinese government. The company has said it has never shared U.S. user data with Chinese authorities and won't do so if it is asked. To date, the U.S. government also has not provided any evidence that shows TikTok shared such information with Chinese authorities. The platform has about 170 million users in the U.S.

The security briefing seemed to change few minds, instead solidifying the views of both sides.

"We have a national security obligation to prevent America's most strategic adversary from being so involved in our lives," said Rep. Nick LaLota, R-N.Y.

But Rep. Robert Garcia, D-Calif., said no information has been shared with him that convinces him TikTok is a national security threat. "My opinion, leaving that briefing, has not changed at all," he said.

"This idea that we're going to ban, essentially, entrepreneurs, small business owners, the main way how young people actually communicate with each other is to me insane," Garcia said.

"Not a single thing that we heard in today's classified briefing was unique to TikTok. It was things that happen on every single social media platform," said Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif.

Nation

Biden, Trump clinch nominations



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This combo image shows President Joe Biden, left, Jan. 5, 2024, and Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump, right, Jan. 19, 2024.

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump clinched their parties' presidential nominations Tuesday with decisive victories in a slate of low-profile primaries, setting up a general election rematch that many voters do not want.

The outcome of contests across Georgia, Mississippi and Washington state was never in doubt. Neither Biden, a Democrat, nor Trump, a Republican, faced major opposition. But the magnitude of their wins gave each man the delegate majority he needed to claim his party's nomination at the summertime national conventions.

Not even halfway through the presidential primary calendar, Tuesday marked a crystallizing moment for a nation uneasy with its choices in 2024.

There is no longer any doubt

» Sets stage for grueling general election rematch

that the fall election will feature a rematch between two flawed and unpopular presidents. At 81, Biden is already the oldest president in U.S. history, while the 77-year-old Trump is facing decades in prison as a defendant in four criminal cases. Their

rematch—the first featuring two U.S. presidents since 1912—will almost certainly deepen the nation's searing political and cultural divides over the eight-month grind that lies ahead.

In a statement, Biden celebrated the nomination while casting Trump as a serious threat to democracy.

Trump, Biden said, "is running a campaign of resentment, revenge, and retribution that threatens the very idea of America."

He continued, "I am honored that the broad coalition of voters representing the rich

diversity of the Democratic Party across the country have put their faith in me once again to lead our party—and our country—in a moment when the threat Trump poses is greater than ever."

Trump, in a video posted on social media, celebrated what he called "a great day of victory."

"But now we have to get back to work because we have the worst president in the history of our country," Trump said of Biden. "So, we're not going to take time to celebrate. We'll celebrate in eight months when the election is over."

Both candidates dominated Tuesday's primaries in swing-state Georgia, deep-red Mississippi and Democratic-leaning Washington. Voting was taking place later in Hawaii's Republican caucus.

Despite their tough talk, the road ahead will not be easy for either presumptive nominee.

in his pajamas as vice president, laments over his oh-so messy garage at his house in Delaware and talks of juggling international crises while other matters intrude.

Taken together, they illustrate the idiosyncrasies of a presidency and showcase a hallmark of Biden's political career: storytelling.

A question about whether he brought classified information as vice president to his home in Wilmington, Delaware, turned into a 25-paragraph stream of consciousness answer about where he kept photos from his vice presidential days. That in turn morphed into a well-worn tale of that one time he "embarrassed the hell" out of the leader of Mongolia, apparently by exceeding expectations with a bow and arrow.

In his conversations with investigators, Biden makes offhand remarks about working

Hur transcript reveals Biden's profound, mundane moments

WASHINGTON (AP)—Special counsel Robert Hur was thanking the president for his time. He understood, Hur said, that there were a lot of things going on that demanded Joe Biden's attention.

"We may be interrupted by one," Biden said, explaining that he'd just gotten off the phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It was Oct. 8, 2023, the day after the attack on Israel by Hamas, and the president was navigating a major multi-task, trying to prevent a wider Mideast conflict while looking out for his own interests at a time of potential legal jeopardy.

Still, Biden told prosecutors he hoped they could get

through the interview. And Hur let the president know they appreciated it.

Their exchange was in a transcript released Tuesday of five hours of Biden interviews with federal prosecutors who investigated his handling of classified documents and concluded there was not enough evidence to charge him with any crimes.

While the release of the transcript may not have altered preconceived notions about Biden, it did offer a rare window into the profound and mundane realities of day-to-day life for the president.

In his conversations with investigators, Biden makes offhand remarks about working

World

IN THWARTING INCURSION FROM UKRAINE

Russia says it killed 234 fighters

Ukrainian long-range drones smashed into two oil facilities deep inside Russia on Tuesday, officials said, while an armed incursion claimed by Ukraine-based Russian opponents of the Kremlin unnerved a border region just days before Russia's presidential election.

The attack by waves of drones across eight regions of Russia displayed Kyiv's expanding technological capacity as the war extends into its third year. The cross-border ground assault also weakened President Vladimir Putin's argument that life in Russia has been unaffected by the war, though he remains all but certain to win another six-year term after eliminating all opposition.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that Moscow's military and security forces killed 234 fighters while thwarting the incursion. In a statement, the ministry blamed the attack on the "Kyiv regime" and "Ukraine's terrorist formations," insisting that the Russian military and border forces were able to stop the attackers and avert a cross-border raid. It also said the attackers lost seven tanks and five armored vehicles.

The reports of border fighting earlier on Tuesday were murky, and it was impossible to ascertain with any certainty what was unfolding in Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions. Cross-border

attacks in the area have occurred sporadically since the war began and have been the subject of claims and counterclaims, as well as disinformation and propaganda.

Soldiers who Kyiv officials say are Russian volunteers fighting for Ukraine claimed to have crossed the border. The Freedom of Russia Legion, the Russian Volunteer Corps and the Siberian Battalion released statements and videos on social media claiming to show them on Russian territory.

They said they wanted "a Russia liberated from Putin's dictatorship."

The authenticity of the videos couldn't be independently verified.

Fighters coming out of Ukraine attempted to reach the town of Tetkino, which lies close to the border, according to the governor of Russia's Kursk region, Roman Starovoit. He said Tetkino was being shelled.

"There was an attempt by a sabotage and reconnaissance group to break through. There was a shooting battle, but there was no breakthrough," he said in a video message on Telegram.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the Tetkino attacks were driven back, but provided no further details.

It also said Ukrainian fighters made at least four attempts to cross into the Bel-

gorod region but all attacks were repelled by warplanes, artillery and missiles.

The representative of Ukraine's intelligence agency, Andrii Yusov, told Ukrainska Pravda that the military groups are made up of Russian citizens.

"On the territory of the Russian Federation, they operate completely autonomously and independently," he said.

In May, Russia alleged that dozens of Ukrainian militants crossed into one of its border towns in the Belgorod region, striking targets and forcing an evacuation, before more than 70 of the attackers were killed or pushed back by what the authorities termed a counterterrorism operation. Ukrainian officials have denied any link with the group.

Meanwhile, one Ukrainian drone struck and set ablaze an oil refinery in the Nizhny Novgorod region, according to regional governor Gleb Nikitin. That region is located some about 775 kilometers (480 miles) from the Ukraine border.

In another deep strike, a drone was shot down in the Moscow region, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin said. Though it was brought down well south of the city center, the drone was close to Zhukovsky Airport, one of Moscow's four international airports. (AP)

Ramadan begins in Gaza with hunger worsening, no end in sight to the war

RAFAH, Gaza Strip

(AP)—Palestinians began fasting for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on Monday with cease-fire talks at a standstill, hunger worsening across the Gaza Strip and no end in sight to the war between Israel and Hamas.

Prayers were held outside amid the rubble of demolished buildings. Fairy lights and decorations were hung in packed tent camps, and a video from a U.N.-school-turned-shelter showed children dancing and spraying foam in celebration as a man sang into a loudspeaker.

But there was little to celebrate after five months of war that has killed over 30,000 Palestinians and left much of Gaza in ruins. Families would ordinarily break the daily sunrise-to-sundown fast with holiday feasts, but even where food

is available, there is little beyond canned goods, and the prices are too high for many.

"You don't see anyone with joy in their eyes," said Sabah al-Hendi, who was shopping for food Sunday in the southernmost city of Rafah. "Every family is sad. Every family has a martyr."

The United States, Qatar and Egypt had hoped to broker a cease-fire ahead of the normally joyous holiday that would include the release of dozens of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of a large amount of humanitarian aid, but the talks have stalled.

Hamas is demanding guarantees that any such agreement will lead to an end to the war. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected that demand, vowing to continue the offensive until "total victory" against the

militant group and the release of all the remaining hostages held in Gaza.

Netanyahu said Monday that Israel had killed "Hamas' number four" leader and added that more targeted killings were to come.

"Three, two, and one are on the way. They are all dead men. We will reach them all," he said.

Netanyahu was likely referencing the assassination of Saleh Arouri, the deputy political head of Hamas and a founder of the group's military wing, who was killed in a blast in Beirut in January. Israel was widely believed to be behind the blast, although it did not take responsibility.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Israel and Hamas to honor the spirit of Ramadan by "silencing the guns" and releasing all the hostages.

Life & Style

Kate's photo scandal shows how hard it is for UK monarchy to control narrative

LONDON (AP)—The scandal over Kate, Princess of Wales' family snapshot is a new chapter in the thorny relationship between the media and Britain's royal family.

It's also a sign of how hard it is for the monarchy to control

its own narrative in the social-media era.

"Social media has empowered the royals to curate their public image in new ways," royal historian Ed Owens said Tuesday.

"But they have also given

over significant power to the end user. And that end user ... desires greater insight, greater intimate detail about what exactly has been going on behind closed doors."

The palace issued the image of Kate and her children—

Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis—on Sunday to mark Mother's Day in Britain. A family snapshot taken, the palace said, by Prince William, it was intended to calm speculation about Kate's health, almost two months after she

had abdominal surgery for an unspecified condition.

But within hours, The Associated Press withdrew the photo over concerns it had been digitally manipulated in a way that did not meet AP's photo standards. For instance, it contained an inconsistency in the alignment



Kate

King Charles III has also had to cancel public duties while he undergoes treatment for an unspecified form of cancer. Charles' relative openness about his diagnosis was a departure for the generally secretive royal family.

Both online conversation and traditional media in the U.K. were dominated Tuesday by what the Daily Mirror called the "Picture of Chaos" and the Daily Mail labeled a "PR disaster" for the royals.

The tabloid Sun leapt to the princess' defense with a front page that thundered: "Lay off Kate." The tabloid said "social media trolls, idiotic conspiracy theorists and sniping media critics" were bullying the future queen.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Kelly Clarkson and Peyton Manning join NBC's Paris Olympics opening ceremony coverage as hosts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Singer Kelly Clarkson and NFL legend Peyton Manning will bring a new flavor to NBC Universal's upcoming Paris Olympics coverage this summer. Clarkson and Manning are expected to join Mike Tirico to host the opening ceremony, the network announced Tuesday night. The ceremony's live coverage will air July 26 on NBC and Peacock at noon ET. "I'm extremely honored to have a front row seat," said Manning, a Pro Football Hall of Famer who won two Super Bowls during his 18 seasons in the NFL. He is now the co-host of "Monday Night Football with Peyton and Eli" with his brother and former NFL quarterback Eli Manning. Clarkson is a three-time Grammy and multi-Emmy winner through her NBC talk show "The Kelly Clarkson Show." She also hosted the NFL Honors last year.

The New York Times is fighting off Wordle look-alikes with copyright takedown notices

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Times is fighting off Wordle "clones"—arguing that numerous games inspired by the mega-popular word-guessing game infringe on its

copyright protections. Hundreds of copycats have emerged since Wordle skyrocketed to internet fame less than three years ago. And now the Times, which purchased the game in 2022, is sending takedown notices to people behind some of the look-alikes. The Times has filed several Digital Millennium Copyright Act, or DMCA, takedown notices to developers of Wordle-inspired games, which cited infringement on the Times' ownership of the Wordle name, as well as its look and feel—such as the layout and color scheme of green, gray and yellow tiles. In a prepared statement, a New York Times Co. spokesperson said the company has no issue with people creating similar word games that do not infringe its Wordle "trademarks or copyrighted gameplay." But the company took action against one user on software developer platform GitHub who created a "Wordle clone" project that included instructions on how to create "a knock-off version" of Wordle, and against others who shared his code.

Director Roman Polanski is sued over more allegations of sexual assault of a minor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A woman has sued director Roman Polanski, alleging he raped her in his home when she was a minor in 1973. The woman aired the allegations, which the

90-year-old Polanski has denied, in a news conference with her attorney, Gloria Allred, on Tuesday. The account is similar to the still-unresolved Los Angeles criminal sexual assault case that prompted Polanski in 1978 to flee to Europe, where he has remained since. The woman who filed the civil lawsuit said she went to dinner with Polanski, who knew she was under 18, in 1973, months after she had met him at a party. She said Polanski gave her tequila shots at his home beforehand and at the restaurant. She said she became groggy, and Polanski drove her home. She next remembers lying next to him in his bed.

Eric Carmen, the Raspberries frontman and 'All by Myself' and 'Hungry Eyes' singer, dies at 74

NEW YORK (AP)—Singer-songwriter Eric Carmen, who fronted the power-pop 1970s band the Raspberries and later had soaring pop hits like "All by Myself" and "Hungry Eyes" from the hit "Dirty Dancing" soundtrack, has died. He was 74. His death was announced on his website by his wife, Amy Carmen, who did not reveal a cause, saying only that he died "in his sleep, over the weekend." "It brought him great joy to know, that for decades, his music touched so many and will be his lasting legacy," the

message read. Carmen had 13 songs in the Billboard Hot 100, including three in the Top 10. The Raspberries, which formed in Cleveland, had four Top 40 singles, including the Top 5 hit "Go All the Way."

Beyoncé's new album will be called 'Act II: Cowboy Carter'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Beyoncé is full of surprises—and on Tuesday, dropped yet another one. Her forthcoming album has a name: 'Act II: Cowboy Carter.' The title was revealed on Bey's official website, along with details on a few limited edition CD, vinyl and box set releases.

'Act II: Cowboy Carter' arrives March 29. Beyoncé first announced the news of a album last month after starring in a Verizon commercial during the Super Bowl that ended with the superstar saying "They ready, drop the new music." The main details about the release had been a cryptic Instagram video with country iconography appeared that teased "act ii" coming out in March. (Beyoncé's 2022 album "Renaissance" is frequently referred to as "Act I: Renaissance.") Soon after, she released two new country tracks—"Texas Hold 'Em" and "16 Carriages." Those releases made Beyoncé the first Black woman to top Billboard's country music chart.

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—His writing won China's first Nobel Prize for Literature, but is it patriotic enough for Xi Jinping's China? That's the question at the center of a high-profile lawsuit now driving a debate about nationalism in China.

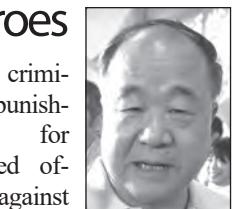
Patriotic campaigns have become more common in recent years in China, as online nationalists attack journalists, writers or other public figures they say have offended the country's dignity, but it is unusual for a figure as prominent as Mo Yan to be targeted.

Patriotic blogger Wu Wan-zheng, who goes by "Truth-Telling Mao Xinghuo" online, sued under a law that carries civil penalties and, in some

cases, criminal punishments for perceived offenses against China's heroes and martyrs.

Mo claimed Mo's books have smeared the Chinese Communist Party's reputation, "beautified" enemy Japanese soldiers and insulted former revolutionary leader Mao Zedong.

The lawsuit filed last month demands that the author apologize to all Chinese people, the country's martyrs and Mao, and pay damages of 1.5 billion yuan (\$209 million)—1 yuan for each Chinese person. He also requested that Mo's books be removed from circulation.



Nobel laureate Mo Yan is accused of insulting China's heroes

Ex fails to show at family funeral

DEAR ABBY: My mom passed away recently, and the person I was in a relationship with from adolescence to my adulthood, "Charles," didn't attend her funeral. While I'm currently in a relationship with someone else I deeply love, I still feel my mother was fond of Charles despite our many hardships. Her affection for him showed without a doubt, many times without my involvement. Despite my resentment toward Charles, it never swayed her opinion of him.

I no longer speak to Charles. This pattern was well set before Mom's death. Because she cared for him, I think it was wrong of him not to show up to pay his respects, regardless of what our situation currently is. For the record, I didn't attend either of his parents' funerals because Charles liked to gaslight and cause drama.

Now that I'm no longer a teenager, I see him for who he really is. I thought I was in love at the time, but I realize now that I was still in the "age of innocence." While I no longer want him in my space or life, I still feel his not attending was selfish and pathetic. Are my feelings valid?

MOURNING IN MISSOURI

DEAR MOURNING: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your dear mother. That said, the time has come to let go of your relationship with Charles. You wrote that you no longer want him in your life, yet you

cling to your resentment of him.

Funerals are for the LIVING. The deceased are past the point of knowing if someone attends or not. Charles may have stayed away because he knows you dislike him and felt unwelcome. Scrub him out of your head and stop living in the past. As the late Elie Wiesel once pointed out, "The opposite of love isn't hate, it is indifference."

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend's 36-year-old son refuses to work. He has every excuse in the book. No job is just right for him. Without any education or training, he expects to make \$20 per hour. Even then, he either quits or gets fired. He has lived off family for all of the five years I have known him. He couldn't find a job even part time last year, and never paid rent. We were forced to move.

Now we are in a 55-plus community that does NOT allow "children," and her son is hiding in the living room and porch. He has created a cell for himself. If discovered, the community can evict us. How do we get him out?

PRISON FOR ALL IN FLORIDA

DEAR PRISON FOR ALL: The son is 36 and "hiding" in a cell he has created for himself? Is he mentally disabled? Taking drugs? After five years, it's time you and

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



your girlfriend formed a united front and gave her son a deadline by which to find a job and move. After that deadline, he can couch surf with friends if necessary. Then cross your fingers and pray the management of the community in which you live doesn't catch on to what's been going on, or you and your girlfriend may be looking for another home as well.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pacers take down West-leading Thunder, 121-111



O K L A H O M A C I T Y (AP)—Myles Turner scored 24 points to help the Indiana Pacers defeat the Oklahoma City Thunder 121-111 on Tuesday night.

Tyrese Haliburton had 18 points and 12 assists and Pascal Siakam added 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Pacers, who shot 53.9% from the field and snapped Oklahoma City's three-game win streak.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 30 points and 10 rebounds, Lu Dort scored 18 points and Chet Holmgren added 15 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder, who fell into a tie with the Denver Nuggets at the top of the Western Conference standings.

Gordon Hayward got his first start in 11 games since being traded to Oklahoma City and scored nine points in 30 minutes. He started in place of Jalen Williams, who was out with a sprained right ankle. Williams is Oklahoma City's No. 2 scorer this season with 19 points per game.

KNICKS 106, 76ERS 79

NEW YORK (AP)—Josh Hart had 20 points, 19 rebounds and 10 assists in his fourth triple-double of the season, OG Anunoby scored 14 points in his return from an 18-game absence and New York beat Philadelphia.

Jalen Brunson added 20 points and nine assists for the Knicks, who finally got one of their injured starters back and looked nothing like the team that was held to an NBA season-



(back), Kristaps Porzingis (hamstring) and Al Horford (toe) but shot so well it didn't matter much.

Jrue Holiday scored 16 points and Sam Hauser had 14 as the Celtics made 20 3-pointers and outscored the Jazz on second-chance points, 22-8.

Keyonte George scored 14 of his 26 points in the first quarter, Jordan Clarkson tallied 21 and Collin Sexton had 20 for Utah, which has dropped 11 of its last 13 games.

The Jazz played without leading scorer Lauri Markkanen (thigh) and Taylor Hendricks (toe).

GRIZZLIES 109, WIZARDS 97

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Trey Jemison scored a career-high 24 points, GG Jackson added 19 and Memphis used a late rally to hold off Washington.

Jake LaRavia added 16 points for Memphis. Jemison was 11 of 13 from the field.

Kyle Kuzma had 24 points, seven rebounds and five assists for the Wizards, who were trying to win three straight games for the first time this season. Corey Kispert finished with 22 points and Deni Avdija had 16.

ROCKETS 103, SPURS 101

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Fred VanVleet scored 21 points and Houston held off San Antonio.

Houston won its fourth straight on the road and is five games behind Golden State for 10th in the Western Conference.

Tre Jones had 22 points and Jeremy Sochan added 21 as San Antonio lost for the fourth time in five games. Victor Wembanyama finished with 13 points, 10 rebounds and six assists after a sluggish start.

At 14-52, San Antonio must finish at least 7-9 to avoid matching the franchise's worst record of 20-62 set in 1997.

With Embiid out, the 76ers sliding toward play-in round that could have several stars in 2024

By NOAH TRISTER AP
SPORTS WRITER

Less than two months ago, Joel Embiid scored 70 points in a game.

He's played twice since then, and this week his Philadelphia 76ers struggled to score 70 as a team.

At least they won that unsightly matchup, 79-73 over the New York Knicks. That snapped a three-game losing streak for Philadelphia. The previous game, the 76ers fell behind by 35 points in the second quarter of a home loss to New Orleans. Philadelphia is 7-15 since Embiid's 70-point game, largely because of the knee operation that's kept the reigning MVP off the court.

"It just seems like the list keeps getting longer every night and that's not easy for anybody's mentality or psyche, but I'm not giving no excuses," said coach Nick Nurse, whose team was also without All-Star Tyrese Max-

ey the last four games. "There are some good players out there that need to play a heck of a lot better than they did."

Nurse could at least take solace in the fact that Philadelphia rallied and only lost to the Pelicans by eight. Then the 76ers beat New York. But

Philadelphia is now in sixth place in the Eastern Conference, just a half-game ahead of Indiana. So if the season ended now, the 76ers would be just one spot above the play-in round.

When the play-in round was created, it seemed like a way to keep more teams in postseason contention and create dramatic, single-elimination matchups between teams that aren't likely to make lengthy playoff runs. But last season, a couple teams came out of the play-in tournament and stuck around for a while. Miami went all the way to the NBA Finals, and the Los Angeles Lakers made the conference finals.

Those two teams underscored the fact that there's been a fair amount of glamour in this preliminary round since it began in 2021. That year, LeBron James and the Lakers faced Stephen Curry and Golden State with No. 7 seed in the West on the line.

Brooklyn—with Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving—was in the play-in tournament the following season. Then the Lakers and Heat had to get through it in 2023 before going on to bigger and better things.

Miami actually lost its play-in opener before beating Chicago in a winner-take-all battle for the No. 8 seed. Then the Heat knocked off Milwaukee, New York and Boston before losing in the Finals to Denver.

This season's play-in round could be the most star-studded yet. In the Western Conference alone, Luka Doncic, Irving and the Dallas Mavericks are currently in eighth place, with the Lakers and

points and 11 rebounds before leaving the game late with an apparent chest injury.

After trailing 57-35 midway through the second quarter, Minnesota seized control in the second half and finished the team's largest comeback since November 2012.

Paul George scored 22 points and James Harden had 12 for the Clippers, who have lost two straight games for only the second time since Christmas.

KINGS 129, BUCKS 94
SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—De'Aaron Fox scored 29 points and Sacramento beat Milwaukee for the first time in more than eight years.

Sacramento had not defeated

Warriors immediately behind them. Durant now plays for Phoenix, and the Suns are in sixth, just a game ahead of the cutoff for the play-in.

And if Philadelphia falls into the 7-10 range in the East, then Embiid could be in the play-in round as well. Imagine the drama if James, Curry, Doncic, Irving, Durant and Embiid were all facing the possibility of a quick elimination—while believing that if they can just make it past that first hurdle, their teams are capable of contending for the title.

Embiid, of course, still has to make it back. He had meniscus surgery on his knee and hasn't played since Jan. 30. He said a couple weeks ago he'd try to play regardless of where the 76ers are in the standings, and he also was hopeful of being able to participate in the Summer Olympics during the offseason.

Philadelphia has dropped only eight of the 34 games Embiid has played in 2023-24. The 76ers have lost 11 since the start of February without their star big man.

Milwaukee since Feb. 1, 2016, with the 15-game losing streak being the longest active streak for any team.

This game was never in doubt. The Kings never trailed and led by double digits since the midway point of the second quarter and built the lead to 30 points in the fourth quarter.

Domantas Sabonis had 22 points and 11 rebounds, setting a Kings single-season record with his 47th consecutive double-double. Jerry Lucas had set the mark in 1967-68. Malik Monk added 25 points off the bench.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points and 13 rebounds for the Bucks, who went 1-3 on a four-game California swing.

CELTICS 123, JAZZ 107
SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Jayson Tatum scored 38 points and Derrick White added 24 to lead Boston over struggling Utah.

The Celtics were missing rotation players Jaylen Brown

Curry cleared to resume on-court work as he recovers from right ankle sprain

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Stephen Curry was cleared Tuesday to resume on-court activity as he recovers from his latest right ankle sprain, and if all goes well could rejoin the Golden State Warriors for practice Friday in Los Angeles.

The team provided an update on Curry's health after he was re-evaluated Tuesday and determined to be making "good progress." He is scheduled to be examined again after the Friday workout. He will train in the Bay Area until then, missing Wednesday's game at Dallas. The Warriors play at the Lakers on Saturday night.

An MRI on Curry's ankle last week revealed no struc-

tural damage.

The two-time MVP was hurt late in the fourth quarter of last Thursday's loss to the Chicago Bulls. Curry rolled the ankle driving to the basket, then limped off and headed to the locker room.

Curry missed his fourth and fifth games of the season Saturday and Monday, both against San Antonio. Since the 2014-15 season, the Warriors are 65-105 in the regular season without the 10-time All-Star.

Curry, who turns 36 on Thursday, has hurt the same ankle several times previously during his 15-year career.

The Warriors are 10th in the Western Conference with 18 games remaining.

Limited slots available for NMC's Golf Open



Golfers who are looking for a chance to win amazing prizes can still enter in the Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24. Online registration is available by accessing www.marianas.edu/golf and will close on March 22, 2024 at 12pm.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on the East and West Courses of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort. The tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250. First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies Flights will each



Yuko Togawa tees off on the East Course of the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort.

receive \$800. Second place finishers will receive \$500 and third place finishers will receive \$300.

Like previous tourneys, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a 2023 Honda Civic Type R from Joeten Motors, a \$10K Cash Prize from Ambyth Shipping, a \$10K Cash Prize from Pacifica Insurance, a \$10K Shopping Spree at Top Shelf Wines and Spirits, and a \$3K Cash Prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip

modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the College with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.instagram.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

KANOA

From page 16

day, they defeated Paire FC, 5-1, for another win in MSL 1. Kanoa's Andrew Omelau drew first blood in the first minute, but it was immediately evened up from a goal by Paire's Jordan Ruiz.

However, that was all Paire wrote, as they went on to be scoreless for the rest of the game, while Kanoa added four more.

The Kanoa team in MSL 2 also won after they blanked Paire FC, 2-0. Dhiraj Chhetri and Carl Salas were Kanoa's two goals in the first half.

In Hana's game, they slipped past Matansa FC, 2-1, last Fri-

day in MSL 2. It was an even match up as both teams couldn't find the back of the net, with minutes passing by and not a single goal in the first half.

Finally, Hana's Dong Ik Jang let one fly and got one on the board in the 28th minute. There was a lot of back-and-forth on the pitch again until Matansa tied the game up in the 36th minute from a goal by Intiaz Nadim.

Now it was a race to whoever could break the tie and hold on as time quickly expired. Hana's Scott Kim delivered the final blow in the 39th minute to take back the lead, 2-1. Matansa conceded as the match went on without another chance at the goal for them.

scored by Kianu Aldan, Kiana Camacho, Amy Cabrera, and Carey Demapan.

Cabrera and Demapan would score one more each in the third for a 6-0 lead. After BDE's run in the fourth, four more runs were added by the Lady Blue Jays, and pitcher Angel Deleon Guerrero wrapped up the win with six scoreless innings.

Bat & Boujee 12, Boleras 7

Bat & Boujee outscored Boleras, 12-7.

Boleras actually had a 4-3 lead in the second inning after Bon Iguel, Juanah Lizama, Tori Pangelinan, and K.K. Aguon scored, but they couldn't hold on to it as Bat & Boujee came bounding back.

Bat & Boujee's Nish Mario and Lorna Iginoef scored two in the third to tie it up, 5-5, then their lead just skyrocketed from there. Boleras posted up only two more runs and Bat & Boujee took advantage. They scored four in the fifth, two in the sixth, and one in the seventh, to win by five runs.

Results of the men's division will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

LADY

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Lady Sufa's favor quickly after they answered with four runs, to make it 4-3 by the second inning.

Two more runs would score for Lady Sufa and doubled the gap, 6-3, after the Babes failed to produce in the second. The third inning was when the Babes added their final two runs, as Lady Sufa pitcher Eileen Babauta went on to shut them down in the next innings.

Lady Sufa would score six in the third and seven more in the fourth, winning by a margin of 14 runs. Ashley Angui scored four runs, while Jaylina Borja, Bong Babauta, Sheena Maratita, Miyah Duenas, Brinae Cruz, and Jen Dela Cruz contributed two apiece.

Lady Blue Jays 10, BDE 1

The Lady Blue Jays shut down BDE, 10-1.

The only run for BDE was scored by Keyona Tudela in the fourth, while the Lady Blue Jays scattered their runs across the game.

Four runs came for the Lady Blue Jays in the first inning after back-to-back runs

Ambyth Shipping, Seafix Inc. partner for \$10K hole-in-one prize



NMC

Ambyth Shipping and Seafix, Inc. have announced that they are offering a \$10,000 hole-in-one cash prize for the upcoming 19th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Open. In the photo are, from left, Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ambyth Logistics and Trucking executive Alex Ito, Ambyth Shipping Quality Assurance and Human Resources senior executive Josefin "Josh" Dandan, and NMC student Richard Baleares.

Foundation, we thank you," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament will be a two-day event and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250.

"We're truly grateful to Ambyth Shipping for their commitment to lasting impact in higher education.

On behalf of the NMC

economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Like previous tourneys, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a 2023 Honda Civic Type R from Joeten Motors, a \$10,000

shopping spree from Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, a \$10,000 cash prize from Pacifica Insurance, and a \$3,000 cash prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.instagram.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

MHS

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quiet last Saturday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan said he was blessed to be where he is. He said he led the race the whole time, but acknowledged that 5Ks are never easy. "You always have to push yourself at the end," he said.

When asked if they will join the event again next year, he said he is confident that he and the boys will sweep the competition again in the coming years. As for if they planned to all race together, he said that it was unintentional.

Thirteen-year-old Taflinger, for her part, said that she was actually gunning to race in the 10K, but that her dad registered her in the 5K instead. She said she's been training for the 10K and was kind of mad because she was anticipating a longer race. It all worked out in the end

though, as she finished first in the female division.

She said of the event, "I've never been in a race this big. There were like over 500 people and I was scared. I was surprised when I was approaching the finish line and they announced I was the first female to come in. There were so many people so I wasn't expecting that."

Next year, she said she'll be old enough to join the half marathon and is thinking about maybe joining that.

Before the awards banquet last Saturday night at the Hyatt Regency Saipan, Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher Concepcion said a few remarks.

"You made it to Saipan; you made it across the finish line. And in marking 512 registrants this year, it's a 57% increase versus our last marathon two years ago. The success of this event was due in part to our course



certification by World Athletics' professional timing, a beautiful run in paradise, growing business and community support, and awards dinner at the beach here at the Hyatt Regency, and of course, all of you. It's been amazing. Thank you everyone," he said.

He then thanked all of the sponsors that made the event possible.

Lastly, he said that MVA's goal is to continue to make the Saipan Marathon a yearly event, "on the foundation that we've set to deliver a world class marathon here in the Marianas—perfectly safe for families, couples, and singles."

Concepcion then welcomed everyone again to the next Saipan Marathon which is set for Saturday, March 8, 2025.



Pacers take down West-leading Thunder, 121-111.
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Saipan Tribune Sports

Limited slots available for NMC's Golf Open.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

MHS sweeps male division, Addalee 1st female in 5K



By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Marianas High School runners stormed the podium of the 5K men's division in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 last Saturday.

Lady Sufa crushes 670 Magas Babes, 19-5

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Lady Sufa crushed 670 Magas Babes, 19-5, in the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association women's division last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.



coming even after the Babes went radio silent early in the game. The Babes barely kept their head above water after they scored three in the first from Rachel Salalila, Pauline Camacho, and Cat Dela Cruz's runs.

The lead switched to the

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In this file photo, Lady Sufa's Eileen Babauta swings at a pitch during one of their games in the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association women's division at the Dandan Softball Field.

Top 3 in the female division of the 5K race in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 pose for a photo with their prizes, along with Marianas Visitors Authority and Skechers representatives. Center is first place Addalee Taflinger, left of Taflinger is third place Emma Lang, and right of Taflinger is second place Tongren Zhang.

The 5-kilometer/3.1-mile course spanned from the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot to Puerto Rico and back, with freshman Michael Miller in first place with a time of 18:13. Right at his heels a few seconds behind was senior Pony Tang at 18:48, with Takeru Jim in third at 19 minutes flat.

Meanwhile, Saipan International School's Addalee Taflinger cruised to first place in the female division with a time of 23:39. Second went to

Tongren Zhang at 29:10, with Emma Lang in third place with a time of 30:21.

Additional prizes were awarded for the Wacky Awards: Best Costume, Akira Takatsu and Jaimei Hong; Best Body Paint, Luisa Ernest and Ronald Quindoza; Shortest Shorts, Leo Wania and Chung Chise; Most Awesome Shoes, Jennifer Tan; Ugliest Shoes, Okawa Taro; and Craziest Hair, Liezel Davis.

Miller, after the awards ban-

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Kanoa FC, Hana FC notch wins in MSL 1, 2

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Kanoa Football Club in the Marianas Soccer League 1 and 2 notched wins, while Hana FC also won their match in MSL last Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Kanoa in MSL 1 silenced the Men's Development Team, 7-0, last Wednesday. The first half was commanded solely by Kanoa as they scored in two



In this file photo, a Kanoa FC player goes up against a Hana FC player during their game in the Marianas Soccer League at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

back-to-back goals by Brian Lubao and Paul Lizama. The Development Team couldn't catch up and majority of the possession remained with Kanoa.

While the Development Team remained scoreless, Kanoa's Markus Toves scored two, followed by another goal from Ruben Guerrero before the first half was over, making it five to nil.

Two more goals would score by way of Lizama and Daniell Pablo in the last minutes of the second half, with the Development Team conceding as they couldn't catch a break at the net.

In Kanoa's game last Sun-
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